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Baccalaureate Sermon

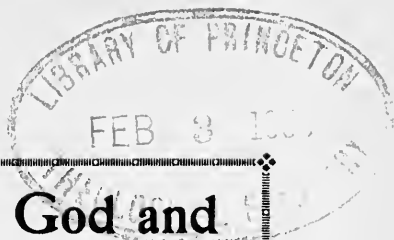
**Lebanon Valley College
1916**

REV. S. D. FAUST, D. D., LL. D.



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The Kingdom of God and Christian Education




Baccalaureate Sermon delivered before the Graduating Class of 1916, Lebanon Valley College

REV. S. D. FAUST, D. D., LL. D.

is a graduate of Lebanon Valley College, of the year 1889. Now Professor of Church History at Bonebrake Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio

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Text: Luke 11: 2—Thy Kingdom Come.
Luke 11: 35—Look therefore whether
the light that is in thee be not darkness

MY THEME at once suggests two great subjects in their relation to each other as bearing upon the social, religious and political progress of the race. Both of them must be defined, perhaps somewhat at length in order to the proper conception of their fundamental place in society.

In general negative statements it may be observed that the expression, "The Kingdom of God" is not used in this discourse to designate the creating, organizing and sustaining administration of the material universe. Neither is it used to designate the humanly organized visible church as consisting of perfected saints, nor "Ecclesiolae in Ecclesia," nor Christian civilization, nor the world evangelized, nor society humanized. It is neither private nor public Eudaemonism, neither Monasticism nor Hermitage, nor Sacramentalism, nor Dogmatism, nor Humanitarianism.

The Kingdom of God is transcendently above Ecclesiasticism or Naturalism, or any, or all of

the many artificial adornments and accidental adaptations self-imposed by organized society.

It is God in the human heart in answer to the soul's insistent cry, "Guide me O thou great Jehovah!" It is God's expression thru the human heart, in the age-long and worldwide process of subjugating all the forces of the world, both natural and spiritual, in accord with the purpose of God to make the fullness of his creation minister to the unbounded needs and pleasures of the sons and daughters of man.

The Kingdom of God is the "Ideal World," for which Jesus taught his Church to pray, when he instilled into the mind, and imposed upon the heart, and put into the mouth that all-comprehending, heaven-born expression of his eternal purpose, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Here is summed up the end of all religion, all statecraft, all science, all philosophy. Here is written in heaven and on earth the final sentence, word, syllable, letter of the purpose of God as to his moral government in this world and the achievement of man in it;—God's will—done—on earth—by man. This is the Kingdom of God.

THIS KINGDOM HAS A KING. We need not seek the permission of either science or philosophy to believe in God. Nor need we build our

faith upon the religious teachings of the priest. Science and religion agree to live and let live, and the scientist who thinks they do not, can no more dissuade the twice-born man from his knowledge of God, gained in the unutterable blessedness of conscious harmony with him, than can scientific questions be settled by general conferences and evangelistic campaigns.

The philosopher may find no place in pure reason for the God-concept, but the plain upon which men pour out their blood in toil and conflict, under misrule and unequal opportunity and out of the midst of it all constantly arise to victorious achievement, furnishes a logic in declaration of a God in history who cares, from whose presence speculative philosophy departs as if caught in the embrace of a cyclone.

The priest may think of God until he forgets man, or think of men until he forgets God, but whether he refines his religion into transcendentalism, Gnostic, Kantian or Emersonian in type, making his pilgrimage as he thinks from the idolatrous world of creeds and rituals to the temple of the living God in the temple of the living soul, by obscure, extravagant or fantastic routes, or whether he secularizes his religion into Humanitarianism, making human nature self-perfectible and human obligations limited to right

doing toward others and an interest in the public welfare, or whether he attempts Ecclesiasticism systematically exercising ecclesiastical authority in exacting forms and liturgical elegance, there yet remains in the hearts of men, in spite of the priest's infidelity to his high calling, an abiding conviction of God upon which there can not be imposed sceptical speculations or ecclesiastical toggery.

There is a King of all the earth in whom to center, without let or hindrance, the profoundest conceptions, the deepest emotions, the highest volitions of men! There is a God who cares for human affairs and who supervises them with an imminence and a righteousness that assure perfect administration in fulfilment of his precious promise neither to leave nor to forsake!

If in this highest form of creation of which we know anything there is no hand supervising and no will controlling the selection of the fittest, then human history is an anomaly, there can be no order in the universe, there is no fashioning intelligence, there is no brooding mother-spirit to warm the cold clods of the earth into the fragrance of the rose or the purity of the lily!

THIS KINGDOM HAS SUBJECTS who are here upon the earth, under the administration of their King.

Ever since the race has put its social relations into governmental expression history has shown two, and only two, general types of government, the sacred, and the secular. On the one hand society has recognized the authority of God which, when thought of as represented in the priest, has taken on a more or less definitely defined objective form of administration, more or less generally acknowledged as authoritative. This is the sacred type of government and in some ages has included both the temporal and the spiritual interests of men. On the other hand society has set up for itself standards of right, and vested in itself the authority upon which to administer its temporal affairs in which seemed to be involved the political and social well-being of the whole body. This is the secular type of government, which down through the centuries has taken on the various forms with which we are all familiar.

The sacred form was probably the earliest development and so was in position to disapprove of the secular and claim superiority because it thought of God as King. The history of the Jewish people is an illustration.

This same history shows that the secular is to recognize those great principles of righteousness in social administration which the sacred

taught as the will of God. When Israel asked of Samuel a king he was displeased and took the request to God, who said, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." After that he had been anointed by the priest and inaugurated by the people, he was rejected upon the tremendous charge, "Thou hast not kept the commandment of Jehovah thy God." David was the man after God's own heart because down to the minutist detail he recognized the sovereignty of God over, and in, the secular administration. Indeed the outstanding feature of historic interest in the history of the Jewish nation is that when the claims of the sacred found place the nation prospered, and to the degree to which the world-spirit type of government became dominant to that degree did disintegration and national disaster follow, until the last whisper of the dying nation mingled with the exultant shouts of its victorious enemies.

Moreover to the degree to which this worldly spirited, secular type of government ignored the divine sovereignty, to that degree did the prophet-representatives of the sacred administration, with indescribable eloquence, raise their voices in warning and admonition on the one hand, and in loving encouragement and triumph-

ant, almost ecstatic declarations of restoration and enlargement on the other; until the Suffering Servant's administration was clearly shown to embody the spiritual glories of the latter days, promised by priest and declared by prophet and believed by the devout, so often, so long, so completely, that no phase of ideal social relations failed of representation in the sacred literature. To the King who loved righteousness and hated iniquity was the promise, "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee." To the citizen this of glorious kingdom is held out the incentive, "For to you is the promise, and to your children. And it shall be in the last days saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your song and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams. Yea, and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And it shall be that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Were these prophets mere enthusiasts, blind to the import of the rapidly accumulating disasters increasingly disintegrating their nation with every departure of their secular rulers from the claims of the sacred? or did their inspired

vision comprehend the place and significance of the spiritual as related to the secular, and the coming glories of the Kingdom of God, grounded in Jesus Christ, and inaugurated and administered in the latter days by the Holy Spirit?

They saw the truth; for at length the gloom gathering around the struggle between an ungodly national life and a ritualized sacred establishment lifted, and a thousand years gave up their mingled hope and fear when a star hung low,—and the angels sang,—and wise men worshipped,—and listen! there is a voice,—“Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand!” Another word! And this from the King! “Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely ye have received, freely give.”

Here is the field of endeavor worthwhile!

Here is the call of true altruism! Here is the message of the new social order! Here is the administration of the real need of humanity! Heaven and earth join in the invitation to evolve an earthly paradise from the world that is. The Spirit and the Bride say come to the God-appointed task, whether you accept the individualistic or the social interpretation of Christianity.

It is not a new form of government, not the sacred domineering the secular, that is to bring in this new kingdom of God. It is the new citizen that is to make the new administration,—the new Kingdom of God,—the ideal world. His message to all the world, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to the church, to business, to industry, to commerce, to political government is "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." His task, by word of power, by reflected personality by dynamic presence, by inspirited touch,—to heal every wrong from bad social environment, and every lack of personal adjustment.

But whence this new citizen? so different from all that nature affords.

He is not of the old order. There are unique subjective features which change the old citizen into the new. And these are neither native capacity nor acquired facilities, neither morality nor virtue, neither faith nor love, —but the new life and the new Spirit in answer to the ultimatum, "Ye must be born again."

.But I turn to the second part of my theme, and desire to keep in mind that education is as broad as the being and relations of the citizen. From this broad point of view the study of education would involve us in the study of civilization, for education is both an affect and a cause

of any nation's manner of life.

So let us turn from this broadest conception of education to that more limited in scope, and contemplate what ought to be included in Christian Education, and what ought to be included in Christian Education, and what it ought to be, prefacing those considerations by a few general observations: 1. Education has to do with the individual. There can be cultured society only as the individuals constituting the community are cultured.

2. Education is not the individual any more than it is the teacher or the school-house.

3. Education finds the individual where he is and leads him out into the wider fields in which he ought to be, but there is a wide difference between knowing and doing, between mentality and spirit, between knowledge and obedience to it.

4. Quoting Dr. Horne's definition "Education is the eternal process of superior adjustment of the physically and mentally developed, free, conscious, human being to God, as manifested in the intellectual, emotional, and volitional environment of man."

5. The man is more than his education. He brings himself to its problems and again departs and goes his way. Himself is an essential,

conscious personality, self-impelled and self-controlled. By processes which neither the teacher nor the school can impose upon him, but which they may lead him to impose upon himself, he acquires the qualities which education develops in consciousness.

Under its leadings he gains an eminence from which 'he beholds a new world. He sees; he knows; the subjective world of his own being comes into his consciousness; his imagination frames new perspectives in science and art and history; he revels in new mental freedom; he works with a new efficiency; he generalized with the accuracy of a god; he is enraptured with the beautiful and the sublime until conscience and character are prepared to embrace truth.

But more particularly what ought to be included in Christian Education? or what types of education ought to be Christian?

I. Answer 1. The education offered by all types of institutions which are the genuine product of real Christian civilization ought to have a definite turn toward those features which would determine it at least in a loose sense to be Christian.

2. That type of education recently taking the name "Religious Education" ought certainly to be distinctively Christian.

3. That education offered by scholastic institutions which are supported and operated by the church has for a long time been designated Christian Education, and this ought certainly to be Christian.

Christian Education has in it an element which particularly faces man's relation to God, and the question of his eternal destiny. It neither ignores nor neglects the physical, the intellectual, the social, and the moral aspects of general education any more than does any other type of education, but it recognizes and emphasizes the God-ward side of man's being and relations, in harmony with the essential truths of the Christian Religion.

The civilization which developed together with the Church under this recognition and emphasis took on a life and a character which has put it in advance of all other civilizations and has developed in it classes and forms of education superior to those found in other civilizations. It owes a debt to the Church. It owes a debt to Christianity.

By every consideration of logical sequence all types of education growing out of a real Christian civilization ought to include a recognition of the underlying, fundamental principles which have determined the characteristics of the

political and social organization and order, the advancement in knowledge refinement and art, the progress in general, which distinguish the Christian civilization from every other; because whatever is unique and superior in the lifting up of man, mentally, morally and socially, has been achieved under the Christian religion, and especially characterizes the Christian civilization.

The prerogative of the Christian citizen, whether conscious of his need or not, is to have his education so directed as to guarantee increasingly the substantial fundamentals of his civilization, so that it may constantly more nearly approach the ideal state of society to be fully realized in the kingdom of God. But here in America, under an exaggerated conception of the scope and intent of freedom, and an unwarranted consideration for the discordant elements of society, our general educational work has been so largely atheized, so largely emptied of all considerations for morality, so completely divorced from all those determining features which distinguish the Christian religion from natural and ethnic religions, that to one on the outside it must look as if we had all gone mad, and were doing our best to break up the very foundations of our civilization. There is not a school in America that does not owe much to the Church,

to say nothing of the Christian religion; because it has brooded popular education into being, and recruited the way from the earliest university of the Middle Ages to the latest State, Industrial, Technical, or Professional school. All this education, by every consideration of the reasonable fitness of things, ought to have in it at least enough of the Christian to make it a contributor to the continuance and vitality of its own civilization rather than be an ingrate who discards his mother to become a half-pagan hybrid.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION has reference to bible instruction as related to public education. It is an effort to correct the lamentable error into which we have fallen—that of providing instruction for the citizen of the State, in order to good citizenship, in utter disregard of the fact that he is both a spiritual being, and a moral agent. Its aim is to provide an adequate program of religious education for the young, in the time available, especially on Sunday morning, and to secure academic recognition by public school authorities for academic work done in the Bible outside of school hours.

Several coincident plans and experiments, such as the Gary, the Greeley and the North Dakota, have been already instituted under adapted plans by not an insignificant number of

cities and towns and districts. The movement has been endorsed by the most powerful and widely operating Educational Associations and by the Official Bodies of at least two of the great religious denominations. The general effect of the movement so far has been most helpful in stimulating the Churches and the Sunday Schools to systematize their Bible instruction, and so to get ready for their part in this movement looking toward the proper functioning of the Church and the Public School in religious education.

It is hardly possible at the present time to place an adequate estimate upon the significance of this "Bible in the Schools Movement," but I shall venture to say that it promises to mark an epoch in Christian civilization. To one somewhat familiar with the great historic events of signal and lasting importance the past discovers none of an educational character so far reaching in its beneficent bearing upon the ultimate coming of the Kingdom of God. If here there is the promise to bring a larger number of our youth under the transforming influence of the spiritual and moral teachings of the word of God, there is also a promise of a larger class of citizens who have some regard for that moral integrity which marks the God-fearing citizen. If there is here the promise of gaining the attention of educators

to the woeful deficiency of the average youth in an important field of knowledge by being required to provide outlines of instruction and examinations in Bible knowledge, there is here also a promise of an awakened interest in the most salutary code of morals and of religious information to be found in all literature. Education is for quality in the citizen, and quality in the citizen is for the well-being of society, and the well-being of society finds its highest realization in the Kingdom of God, where men will do His will, and therefore know of the doctrine. The "Bible in the Schools Movement" certainly ought to be Christian.

But the ointment has its proverbial fly. Science and philosophy are gods in the modern world, and this is an age of much literary activity; and so this movement has already called out ready penmen whose solutions for every problem, whether biological, psychological sociological, soteriological or theological, must be found in predications somewhat averse to the orthodox doctrines of the Christian Church. Hence not a little of the literature already produced in connection with Religious Education is written from the Socinian and Pelagian standpoints, under the guise of the scientific interpretation of the Bible. But stripped of their adornment, to a

common person, those remarkably profound and pious forms of expression simply mean that the Bible is a merely human product, not nearly so trustworthy as are the excavated fragments of ancient tablets, recording the achievements of the erstwhile heathen kings of Godless nations in Egypt and Assyria. The inspiration of the Bible is a groundless tradition, imposed upon ignorant religionists by their priests inspired by impure motives and selfish purposes, and handed down through the centuries in song and story by redactors and imposters. O yes, there is an inspiration of the Bible for while it is not the Word of God, it contains the word of God, the expression of the deepest yearnings of the human heart in its efforts to find *itself*. Shakespeare and Tenneyson, and Paul and Christ were all possessed of the same type of inspiration according to this most learned modern method of religio-scientific enlightenment.

These implications I reject, for there are supernatural elements in the Christian Religion which make it essentially different from all other religions. The relations between God and man are not *purely moral*.

In his own likeness created, and born of the Spirit, man is essentially a spirit, adopted into the family of God, and made a spiritual son.

These relationships furnish the ground for his religious instincts, educability, experiences, and activities.

The revelation of God to man is not merely his conception of sacred things, entirely wrought out of his own entangled aspirations and experiences, the expression of his efforts to find *himself*. The revelation of God is a double revelation. It reveals God to man, and man to himself,—not merely man to himself.

The methods of this revelation are not altogether subject to exact observation, to be specially and methodically formulated into a rational system. Revelation is not a theory, but a fact; and the fact is impossible apart from the hypothesis that there is an element in it beyond man's power to investigate and to systematize.

There are therefore other routes by which to pass those historic facts of the Bible which from a naturalistic standpoint refuse to parallel with our conception of the sciences and of scientific truth. By these we refuse to believe that the story of the Fall is a myth; that Jesus was a mere man and made no vicarious atonement; that children may be educated or entertained into the kingdom; that the only effect of prayer is upon the person praying, or any other such blasphemous scepticisms. We trust our Lord

who has put to confusion the alien on many a field of human controversy, by his Spirit to move the spiritual forces of the churches into effective opposition against the rationalizing tendencies now so apparent in the interpretation of the Bible; and to save Religious Education from the prostitution of itself at the shrine of refined rationalism, under the name, "Scientific Bible Study."

That education offered by the Christian College has for a long time been called Christian. The institution itself is called Christian. 1. Because it is the intention on the part of the supporting constituency that the education here afforded shall be gained under instructors and instruction in accord with the principles of the Christian religion and the distinctive doctrines of the supporting denomination. 2. Because in a certain sense its very existence is a protest against instructors and instruction that are not in accord with such principles and doctrines.

Its task is unique and difficult. It is to compete in academic efficiency, under limited financial support, with the State School, fed at the public crib. At the same time it is to give back to its supporting Church, religious, moral and denominational values which the State school may ignore. These values relate to the results

accruing from the recognition given the Kingdom of God, and from the emphasis placed upon the Christian Religion. They are especially to express themselves in the character of the graduates and in the efficiency of their service in the church and in society.

I need not tell this audience how well these institutions have served their purpose, and how indispensable under present conditions is the denominational college. It is the very fountain from which flow out through all channels of denominational activity floods of vitality and blessing, for as the denominational college performs its proper functions so are enhanced all values in the permanency and efficiency of every department of the supporting denomination.

I have all alone purposely implied the relations which Christian Education bears to the Kingdom, but there are yet other observations without which I must not close.

1. The Kingdom of God contemplates a new social order, but a new social order is impossible without a new moral order, and this is again impossible without Christian Education. Jesus Christ came into the world to save society as well as the individual, to make a heaven of earth; but himself was God's ideal man, the pattern of every single member of the ideal society. Measure the

moral distance between the blessed Son of God and the separatistic Pharisee of his time, and behold the new qualities needed in the present day to bring in the new moral order, and then determine not how much culture of mind is required to produce a regenerate heart, but how much culture is required to give the regenerated heart an adequate efficiency in the hard world which is to be transformed, according to the plan of our Lord when he said, "I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me."

The method of Jesus involves precept and example, the teaching process, but the climax of his own instruction is "Ye must be born again." He makes love and service and self-sacrifice the distinguishing characteristics of the citizens of his kingdom, and makes it as simple and as easy to become a citizen as it is to surrender the will to Him; and as hard and as terrible, as to surrender the will to Him. The price is all that a man hath, "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he can not be my disciple." But once become a citizen, he,—the life of the citizen,—is the broadest expression of the real education. To incorporate in the education of our civilization the religious and the moral is to invite the aid of that Energy which finds man at his highest, and without whose coöperation

there can be no regeneration of society, for there is no vitalized morality apart from religion.

The teaching of the kingdom gives us the assurance that the law of love will finally prevail, when deception and intrigue, injustice and inequality, malice and selfishness, will go down with the deposed prince of their kingdom of darkness, and obedience and righteousness will break the rod of the oppressor and the sword of the arrogant.

That day must show a saner education, a higher mentality, a profounder depth of spiritual insight, a more reasonable religion, a constant morality, a perfected love and a regenerated society.

2. The Kingdom of God contemplates a new spiritual order. The disciples gathered on the Day of Pentecost to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Inspired by this same Holy Spirit they went down to the world of conventional morality with its traditional forms of religion and secular thought, with its diseased bodies and beclouded intellects, with its degenerated society and its lost souls, to show by their example and works the new spiritual order of the new kingdom, by healing the sick, and raising the dead, and by loving men into a new community of common fellow-feeling.

The most enthusiastic advocate of education can rear no shaft too high on which to emblazon the merits of that conception of man which believes no problem of the material world beyond the solution of the perfected human mind. Man's power to know, and to do because he knows, lies still a mystery in the thought of his Creator. The secrets of earth and sky and sea already discovered and utilized, too often for his own undoing, are only the first-fruits of his well-nigh unlimited possibilities. As the luxuries of life become its necessities, new conquests in the realm of nature must ever contribute to his constantly increasing capacity for pleasure, and the gold of today must become the iron of tomorrow.

But as society becomes more complex in life and organization its insistent need will clamor for a righteousness which education alone can not supply.

Education is power, but it can not change selfishness into love. Education adjusts the individual to his environment and suggests the best rational method and aim and end, but stands defeated in the presence of demands for purity and the spiritual regeneration of the soul; it contributes to the culture and refinements of society, but it brings no Holy City down from God out of heaven.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the class of 1916
You stand today where the determining stream-
lets of fancy and feeling in the formative period
of your life merge into the great river of motive
and purpose. More majestic and silent this, but
how noisily and gaily and rapidly those have
come down from no one knows where!

You thought you were playing as you eagerly
followed their meandering courses, first one
and then another. Sometimes through gloomy
forests you feared to follow, but often the sun-
shine kissed the waters into faries whom your im-
patient hearts might question, and your imagi-
nation place adown the years to choose your path
and grant your wishes.

Without a single omen of ill you have today
come to the very spot at which so long ago you
located the most elusive of them all, the gradua-
tion from some college. She greets you with a
smile and beckons you farewell, for tomorrow
you stand in the world's wide arena, on serious
tasks intent.

The persistence and fortitude you have
shown in the finishing of your work in this insti-
tution prophesy large achievement in any field of
endeavor you may choose. Your excellent pow-
ers of body mind and heart by these courses of
study adjusted to appreciate the sources of your

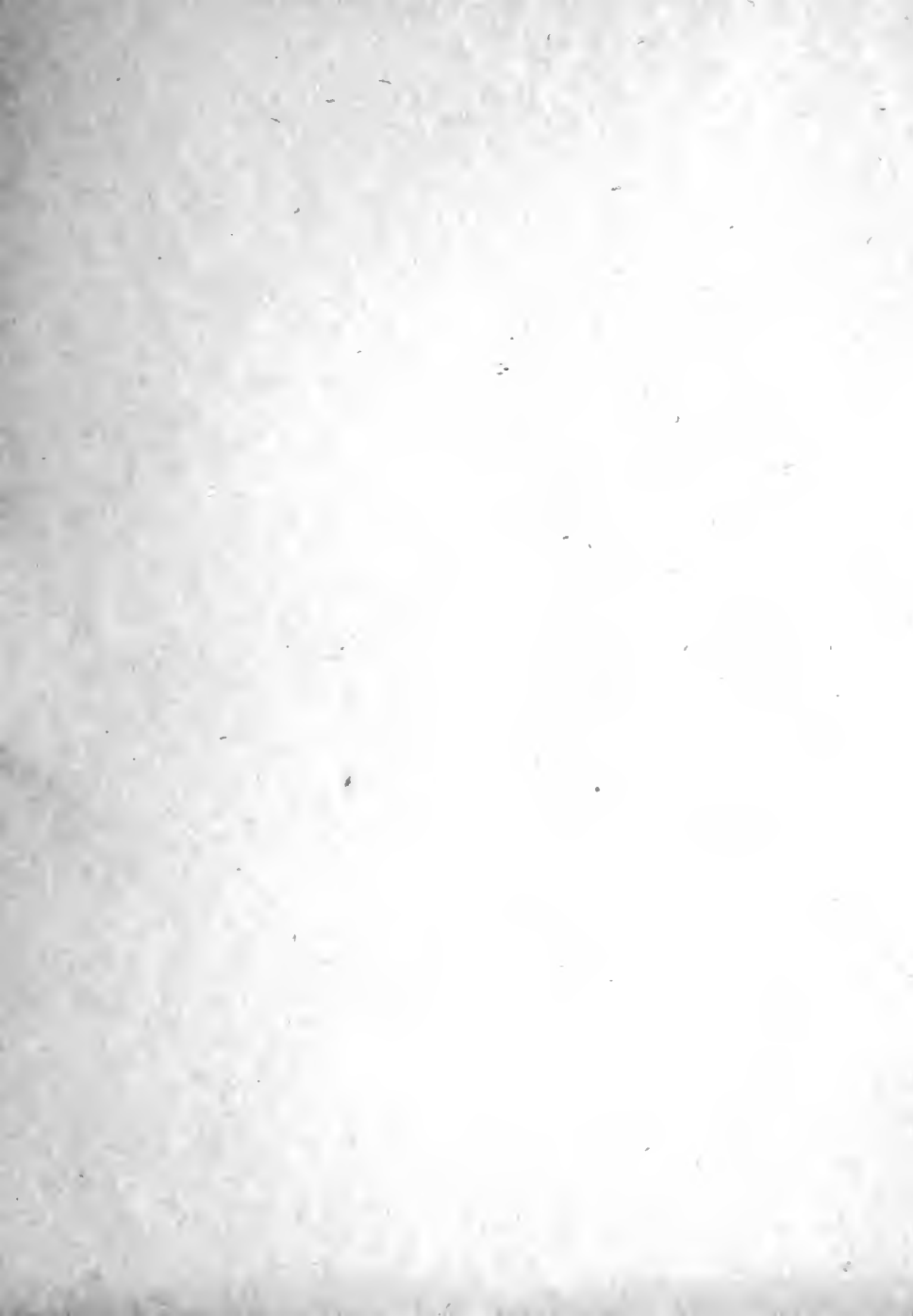
joy, and to endure the strenuous efforts by which you become the victorious possessor of all that is good and best, make you worthy of the regard and consideration of every lover of our race.

From this day you have a commission to make some home better, because you bear the diploma of Lebanon Valley College. Above your fellows you are entrusted, because you bear the influence and form of a cultured mind, with the finer adjustments of the social body while it makes clear to itself and accepts the positions of the new social consciousness. You are to be leaders in society. Because you have been drinking long and refreshingly at the healing fountains of Christian Education, upon you is enjoined the incomparable duty of showing what a sanctified education can do in the child of the King to make the world-spirit yield its supremacy to the Christ-spirit in home and Church and state.

May there be a long day,—a cheerful, happy day,—reaching far into the evening.

I bid you good-day, for the evening of college life has come. I bid you good-morning! for from this day you begin the toils and achievements of life—the work of bringing the Kingdom of God into realization.





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The kingdom of God and Christian

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